

**THE GREAT IRAQ HEIST**  
**BREMER GETS**  
**DOWN TO BUSINESS**

6

**HOWARD DEAN IS**  
**WHISTLING DIXIE**

10

# THE INDYPENDENT

THE NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

ISSUE #41 NOVEMBER 12-25, 2003

WWW.NYC.INDYMEDIA.ORG

**NATIONAL DATABASE COULD PUT YOU OUT ON THE STREET**

## LANDLORD BLACKLIST THREATENS TENANTS

**MORE COVERAGE OF SLEAZY REAL ESTATE BARONS, P. 4-5**

If you are a tenant and you have ever been to Housing Court, you may have a very hard time finding an apartment if you try to move. A growing number of landlords are using tenant-screening companies that offer detailed data on prospective renters far beyond routine credit checks.

**STEVE WISHNIA REPORTS**

One of the largest tenant-screening companies, First American Registry, based in Rockville, MD, says it issues 17,000 reports a day, which include "Tenant Account Records" from a "nationwide network of landlords and property managers" and numerical risk ratings based on a tenant's credit and court records. It advertises "fast, accurate, and complete access to over 33 million landlord/tenant eviction court records covering over 80 percent of the U.S."

If a tenant has been to Housing Court, that lowers his or her chances of getting an apartment "dramatically," asserts one Manhattan real-estate agent, who estimates that about half the landlords he works with use the screeners. "If you were an owner, and somebody's got a job and good credit, but it came up that they've been to court, would you rent to them?" he asks. "If it's nonpayment, obviously not. If it's a holdover, that's worse. If it's an HP action, that's even worse." A "Housing Part Action" refers to when a tenant sues the landlord to force repairs.

"Right away, thousands of red flags go up," adds another Manhattan real-estate agent, who says about 80 percent of her clients check for court history. "Unfortunately, it's not always fair — sometimes the tenant is right."

"It's happening everywhere," says tenant lawyer James Fishman. "This is a really big problem." With around

365,000 residential Housing Court cases filed each year — about 90 percent nonpayment eviction attempts, the rest "holdover" lease-violation evictions and HP actions, a lot of tenants' names are making the companies' lists.

"The only time people realize this is when they try to look [for an apartment]," says Fishman.

He calls the practice "pernicious." The records last for seven years, and are often not updated. Most landlord-tenant cases are dropped or settled, but he says the registries still list them as "case filed."

Earlier this year, a broker told one of his clients not to bother trying to find an apartment, because her file showed three nonpayment cases from 1996. In another case, the executor of a tenant's will got on the lists because he had been named as a defendant in a suit against the deceased man's estate. Tenants named in owner-occupancy evictions also make the lists, as do tenants where the eviction attempt was pure harassment.

Government housing agencies often tell tenants that the best way to get repairs done is to go on a rent strike, but "that advice gets you blacklisted," Fishman says. And if you file an action, "then you're a real troublemaker."

As the screening companies and databases are national, he adds, the blacklist can follow tenants if they move

out of the city.

Fishman is planning a federal class-action suit against First American Registry, on the grounds that, by not properly updating their records beyond "case filed," they're violating Federal Credit Reporting Act requirements that credit reports have to be "complete and accurate." New York law classifies renting an apartment as a credit transaction, he explains.

According to records obtained by Fishman under a Freedom of Information Act request, the state makes about \$1 million a year selling Housing Court records in electronic form to tenant-screening companies.

The use of court records to screen tenants may be somewhat less common in the outer boroughs than in Manhattan, but it still happens. "We don't use that at all," says an Astoria real-estate agent, but another Queens broker says, "We use them all the time. When you do a credit check, you automatically check landlord-tenant records to see if there are lack-of-payment issues."

"Credit reports show if they've been to court or not," says an agent in the Fort Greene-Clinton Hill area of Brooklyn. How it affects the landlord's decision, she adds, "depends on what they went to court for."

There is not much tenants can do about it, says Fishman. In one case where the landlord refused to renew the lease because the apartment wasn't the renter's primary residence, the tenant agreed to move out in exchange for the holdover eviction being filed against "John Doe," keeping his name out of the court records.

Ultimately, Fishman believes that the lists would be fairer if they only recorded cases where an eviction was actually ordered. But "once landlords have done a three-day notice, there's no way to stop the proceedings," he says. "I have not heard a story where the tenant with the report got the apartment."

*Steve Wishnia has been covering New York City housing issues since the 1980s.*

**COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR, P.2 • CALIFORNIA FIRE, P.3 • RNC WATCH, P.9**



## NEW YORK CITY INDEPENDENT MEDIA CENTER

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### WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues impacting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for The Independent, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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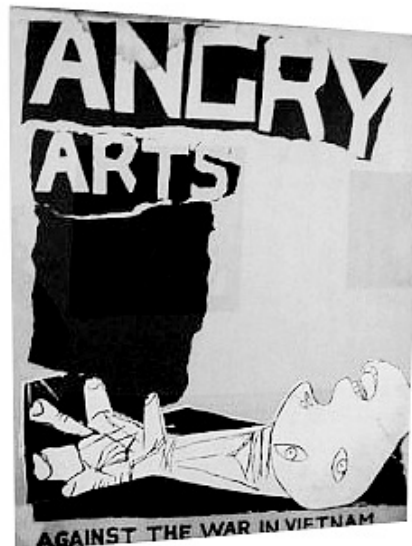
## ANGRY ARTS

*against the war in Vietnam*



# NOVEMBER

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



### THE INDEPENDENT

has open meetings every Tuesday, 7 pm at 34 E. 29 St., 2nd floor.

To submit events for the calendar, call (212) 684-8112.

### FRIDAY NOV 14

8 - 9:30 pm  
\$5 or \$3 with donation of a paperback dictionary  
*Prison & Surveillance: Discussion with Christian Parenti*  
Author of "Lockdown America: Police & Prisons in the Age of Crisis" and "The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America from Slavery to the War on Terror" will read from and discuss both works. All proceeds will go to benefit Books not Bars.  
ABC No Rio  
156 RIVINGTON  
(BETWEEN CLINTON & SUFFOLK)  
212 254-3697 x323

### SAT NOV 15

11 am - 5 pm  
*Screening/discussion: A celebration of the literary legacy of Harlem*  
Keynoted by a film on the life of Harlem Writers Guild co-founder Dr. Henrik Clarke, followed by a panel discussion and reading by contemporary Harlem writers.  
NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY

### SUN NOV 16

1:15 - 2:15 pm  
Free  
*Economics of Empire: Poverty and Unemployment in New York*  
The second in a three-month series covering local, regional, and national economics.  
UNITARIAN CHURCH OF STANTON ISLAND  
312 FILMORE STREET,  
STATEN ISLAND  
(718) 447-2204  
2 pm \$3  
suggested donation

### Walking Tour: African American life in Lower Manhattan

This tour will connect the African Burial Ground to other historic sites in the district including the Leonard Street publication office of the city's first black newspaper *Freedom's Journal*, stations on the Underground Railroad and more.  
SOUTH STREET SEAPORT MUSEUM  
12 FULTON STREET  
http://www.southstseaport.org

2 pm

Free

*Celebration of the life of Arthur Kinoy, one of the three memorials to the Center for Constitutional Rights founder*  
ST JOHN THE DIVINE CATHEDRAL  
SYNOUD HALL  
110TH STREET & AMSTERDAM AVE.  
www.ccr-ny.org

5-7 pm

Free

*Dyke Knitting Circle - 3rd Sunday of every month*  
A self-help and member led workshop. Open to all levels of experience  
BLUESTOCKINGS BOOKSTORE  
172 ALLEN STREET  
(BETWEEN STANTON & RIVINGTON)  
212 777-6028  
www.bluestockings.org

### MON NOV 17

6 pm

*DIY Comix! Workshop Series with Fly*  
This session: final artwork inking techniques.  
BLUESTOCKINGS BOOKSTORE  
172 ALLEN STREET  
(BETWEEN STANTON & RIVINGTON)  
212 777-6028  
www.bluestockings.org

### TUES NOV 18

7 pm

Free

*Ladies' Night at Recycle-a-Bike: Learn to build and repair your own bicycle*  
RECYCLE A BIKE  
55 WASHINGTON STREET,  
BROOKLYN  
718 858-2972

7:30 pm

Free

*Day of Justice for Death Row Inmate Ryan Matthews*  
Screening of Academy Award-nominated Film, *The Farm - Speakers Liz Garbus (Director, The Farm) and Emily and Sarah Kunstler (Co-producers, On the Road to Justice, a film about the Ryan Matthews case).*  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL  
116TH STREET & AMSTERDAM AVENUE  
ROOM 107  
Contact: Lilliana Segura,  
nyc@nodeathpentaloy.org

### THURS NOV 20

6-8 pm

Free

*Rudolf Baranik: His Art and His Legacy*  
This panel features artists from several generations discussing the role of politics in their work.  
JERSEY CITY MUSEUM  
350 MONTGOMERY STREET  
(PATH TRAIN TO GROVE STREET)  
http://www.jerseycitymuseum.org

### FRI NOV 21

2 - 3:30 pm

\$20 general/\$12 students

*Noam Chomsky, After the War*  
The influential writer returns to the stage of Miller Theatre to comment on the post-war situation in Iraq and its implications for the future.  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
MILLER THEATER  
116TH STREET & BROADWAY  
www.millertheatre.com

8:00 pm

\$5

*Prison film night*  
ABC No Rio  
156 RIVINGTON  
(BETWEEN CLINTON & SUFFOLK)  
212 254-3697 x323

8 - 10 pm

\$3

*The Kucinich Campaign: Bringing Vision Back into Politics*  
An evening with Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich and an extensive interview by Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America* and Angela Gilliam, Black feminist anthropologist and activist.  
HUNTER COLLEGE  
KAYE PLAYHOUSE  
68TH STREET & LEXINGTON AVE.  
212-791-1660

8:00

\$10 suggested donation  
*Lobby Hero by Kenneth Longeran*

Theatre at St. Mary's kicks off its inaugural season with performances on November 21st at 8 pm; November 22nd & 23rd at 2 and 8 pm  
ST MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
526 WEST 126TH STREET  
(BETWEEN AMSTERDAM & OLD BROADWAY)  
(212) 252-3167  
for reservations

### SUN NOV 23

8 pm

\$5-\$10 donation

*Film screening: Bombs*  
When the US signed the 1962 Geneva accords protecting Laos, it was secretly planning the heaviest bombing campaign in history—2 million tons of bombs, leaving 10-30 million unexploded cluster bomb bomblets (AKA "bomblets") throughout Laos, the same bombs used in Iraq and Afghanistan.  
BLUESTOCKINGS BOOKSTORE  
172 ALLEN STREET  
(BETWEEN STANTON & RIVINGTON)  
212 777-6028  
www.bluestockings.org

### MON NOV 24

8 pm

*Movement Research: Dance performance featuring Ursula Eagly, Ann Livingston Young and Edisa Weeks.*  
Judson Church, 55 Washington Square South  
212-539-2611

### FRI NOV 28

7 pm

Free

*Critical Mass*  
Bikers and skaters gather at Union Square North for the monthly critical mass ride.

### SAT NOV 29

10 pm

Free

*Riverside Ride*  
Bikers and skaters gather the last Saturday of every month for a ride through Riverside and Central Parks. Usually lasts 2 hours.  
COLUMBUS CIRCLE,  
59TH STREET ENTRANCE TO CENTRAL PARK

### SUN NOV 30

*Fourth Anniversary of the Seattle WTO shutdown*

*Also, International Buy Nothing Day*

### MON DEC 1

6 pm

Free

*Comics and Zine Trading Party*  
BLUESTOCKINGS BOOKSTORE  
172 ALLEN STREET  
(BETWEEN STANTON & RIVINGTON)  
212 777-6028  
www.bluestockings.org

## INDY WINS BIG AT THE IPPIES

THE INDEPENDENT won 6 "Ippies" October 23 at the Independent Press Association's annual awards dinner, the most of any paper in New York City.

### THE AWARD WINNERS WERE:

J.K. Jaffe 1st Place for best editorial  
John Tarleton 1st Place for best feature  
Chris Anderson 2nd Place for best news story  
Lourdes Delgado 2nd Place for best photo  
Emily Price 2nd Place for best photo  
Lina Pallotta 3rd Place for best photo

Former Independent staffer Heather Haddon (pictured far-right) also won three first-place awards for her work with the Bronx-based *Norwood News*.

The Independent is a not-for-profit, all-volunteer, collectively run paper. Weekly meetings are held 7 p.m. Tuesdays at our office at 34 East 29th St., 2nd Fl. For more information, call



# CALI'S WILDFIRE KARMA



BY MIKE DAVIS

Sunday morning in San Diego. The sun is an eerie orange orb, like the eye of a hideous jack-o-lantern. The fire on the flank of Otay Mountain, which straddles the Mexican border, generates a huge whitish-grey mushroom plume. It is a rather sublime sight, like Vesuvius in eruption. Meanwhile the black sky rains ash from incinerated national forests and dream homes.

It may be the fire of the century in Southern California. By brunch on Sunday eight separate fires were raging out of control, and the two largest had merged into a single forty-mile-long red wall. The megalopolis's emergency resources have been stretched to the breaking point and California's National Guard reinforcements are 10,000 miles away in Iraq. Panic is creeping into the on-the-spot television reports from scores of chaotic fire scenes.

It is, of course, the right time of the year for the end of the world.

Just before Halloween, the pressure differential between the Colorado Plateau and Southern California begins to generate the infamous Santa Ana winds. A spark in their path becomes a blowtorch.

Exactly a decade ago, between Oct. 26 and Nov. 7, firestorms fanned by Santa Anas destroyed more than a thousand homes in Pasadena, Malibu and Laguna Beach. In the last century, nearly half the great Southern California fires have occurred in October.

This time climate, ecology and stupid urbanization have conspired to create the ingredients for one of the most perfect firestorms in history. Experts have seen it coming for months.

First of all, there is an extraordinary supply of perfectly cured, tinder-dry fuel. The weather year, 2001-02, was the driest in the history of Southern California. Here in San Diego we had only 3 inches of rain. (The average is about 11 inches). Then last winter it rained just hard enough to sprout dense thickets of new underbrush (a.k.a., fire starter), all of which have now been desiccated for months.

Meanwhile in the local mountains, an epic

drought, which may be an expression of global warming, opened the way to a bark beetle infestation that has already killed or is killing 90 percent of Southern California's pine forests. Last month, scientists grimly told members of Congress at a special hearing at Lake Arrowhead that "it is too late to save the San Bernardino National Forest." Arrowhead and other famous mountain resorts, they predicted, would soon "look like any treeless suburb of Los Angeles."

These dead forests represent an almost apocalyptic hazard to more than 100,000 mountain and foothill residents, many of

whom depend on a single, narrow road for their fire escape. Earlier this year, San Bernardino county officials, despairing of the ability to evacuate all their mountain hamlets by highway, proposed a bizarre last-ditch plan to huddle residents on boats in the middle of Arrowhead and Big Bear lakes.

Now the San Bernardinos are an inferno, along with tens of thousand acres of chaparral-covered hillsides in neighboring counties. As always during Halloween fire seasons, there is hysteria about arson. Invisible hands may have purposely ignited several of the current firestorms. Indeed, in Santa Ana weather like this, one maniac on a motorcycle with a cigarette lighter can burn down half the world.

This is a specter against which grand inquisitors and wars against terrorism are powerless to protect us. Moreover, many fire scientists dismiss "ignition" — whether natural, accidental or deliberate — as a relatively trivial factor in their equations. They study wildfire as an inevitable result of the accumulation of fuel mass. Given fuel, "fire happens."

The best preventive measure, of course, is to return to the native-Californian practice of regular, small-scale burning of old brush and chaparral. This is now textbook policy, but the suburbanization of the fire terrain makes it almost impossible to implement it on any adequate scale. Homeowners despise the temporary pollution of "controlled burns" and

local officials fear the legal consequences of escaped fires.

As a result, huge plantations of old, highly flammable brush accumulate along the peripheries and in the interstices of new, sprawled-out suburbs. Since the devastating 1993 fires, tens of thousands of new homes have pushed their way into the furthest recesses of southern California's coastal and inland fire-belts. Each new homeowner, moreover, expects heroic levels of protection from underfunded county and state fire agencies.

Fire, as a result, is politically ironic. Right now, as I watch San Diego's wealthiest new suburb, Scripps Ranch, in flames, I recall the Schwarzenegger fund-raising parties hosted there a few weeks ago. This was an epicenter of the recent recall and gilded voices roared to the skies against the oppression by an out-of-control public sector. Now Arnold's wealthy supporters are screaming for fire engines, and "big government" is the only thing standing between their \$3 million homes and the ash pile.

520,000 acres  
burned

2,600 homes  
destroyed

up to \$12 billion  
in property damages

at least 20 deaths

Halloween fires, of course, burn shacks as well as mansions, but Republicans tend to disproportionately concentrate themselves in the wrong altitudes and ecologies. Indeed it is striking to what extent the current fire map (Rancho Cucamonga, north Fontana, La Verne, Simi Valley, Vista, Ramona, Eucalyptus Hills, Scripps Ranch and so on) recapitulates geographic patterns of heaviest voter support for the recall.

The fires also cruelly illuminate the new governor's essential dilemma: how to service simultaneous middle-class demands for reduced spending and more public services. The white-flight gated suburbs insist on impossible standards of fire protection, but refuse to pay either higher insurance premiums (fire insurance in California is "cross-subsidized" by all homeowners) or higher property taxes. Even a Hollywood superhero will have difficulty squaring that circle.

Mike Davis is the author of *City of Quartz*, *Ecology of Fear*, and most recently, *Dead Cities: and Other Tales*.

## CORRECTIONS, October 15-24 issue:

The Critical Mass photos from the centerfold were taken by Brad Horrigan; the Freedom Ride photos on page 9 were taken by Sarah Glidden.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### BUSH FIDDLES WHILE CALIFORNIA BURNS

California officials accused the Bush administration of ignoring urgent pleas months ago to remove beetle-infested trees that fueled Southern California's catastrophic fires.

In April, Gov. Gray Davis requested \$430 million to remove dead trees on 415,000 acres of forest, but the request for emergency funds went unanswered until it was denied on Oct. 24. "Congress has been faced with record deficits, and it's very tough to get money for even emergency issues," a spokesman for Sen. Diane Feinstein (D.-CA.) told the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

### WHAT DO TRINIDAD, HUNGARY, COSTA RICA AND BENIN HAVE IN COMMON?

They are among 30 nations that ranked higher than the United States in freedom of the press, as evaluated in a recent report by Reporters Without Borders. The rankings measure the degree of freedom for journalists in each country, and the steps taken by governments to maintain that freedom.

The United States was ranked 31st for press freedom in their own territory, but scored a dismal 135th for behavior beyond their borders. The low rank is attributed to U.S. responsibility for the death of several reporters in Iraq in the ongoing war.

### MOSCOW MULLS KISSING BAN

Moscow city authorities are working on an order that would prohibit kissing in subways and other public places, according to the newspaper *Vechnyaya Gazeta*. "People are making out even on the escalator in the metro. Something must be done about this," city education member Tatyana Maximova is quoted as saying. Under the proposed legislation, fines would range from 300-500 rubles (\$10 to \$17).

Prominent human rights activist Valeriya Novodvorskaya vowed to violate the kissing ban as often as possible if it is enacted. "I will start spending my days kissing in public places — just out of principle," Novodvorskaya told Echo of Moscow radio after the report appeared. She said she would urge other Muscovites to do the same.

### NEXT TARGET: SYRIA

Congress overwhelmingly approved tough new sanctions on Syria on Nov. 12. Syria, a secular Arab dictatorship and longtime foe of Israel, shares a 400-mile border with Iraq. Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) expressed concern that the sanctions were a prelude to a military attack. "[It] is a very real possibility because of the dangerous doctrine of pre-emption created by the Bush administration," Byrd said.

### VETS MARCH FOR PEACE

A 50-member contingent from Veterans for Peace marched up 5th Avenue during New York's annual Veterans Day parade on Nov. 11. Their anti-war message was warmly received by many of the spectators who lined the route. "We were a ragtag army," said Gene Glazer, a WWII veteran from Bloomfield, New Jersey. "We didn't have the spiffy uniforms. But we had the people with us."



## DC 37 WORKERS STILL WAITING ON CITY CONTRACT

BY PHIL ANDREWS

On June 30, 2002, the collective bargaining agreements between the City of New York and the majority of municipal unions expired, leaving 300,000 workers without a contract. At the time, the state was facing a massive budget shortfall that made bargaining difficult. Five thousand city workers were laid off.

But now, with budget woes eased and new money from higher property taxes coming, isn't it time to talk to the unions about new agreements? The mayor doesn't think so.

On Wednesday, Oct. 29 more than 20,000 members of District Council 37 and other unions rallied at City Hall to voice displeasure. The last time the union met with the city on Sep. 15, Michael Bloomberg's representatives again reiterated the demand that any pay raises must be linked to "productivity."

Bloomberg addressed the Municipal Labor Council (MLC) only days before that, claiming "There is no money in the budget for pay raises." The MLC coordinates bargaining on welfare fund and health benefits on behalf of unions representing about 300,000 city employees.

Though the Oct. 29 rally was led by DC 37, many other unions, including the Transport Workers Union and the Service Employees International Union, turned out members. As the largest public employee union in New York with 125,000 members, DC 37 is first in line to bargain with the city. Their contract will set a pattern for tens of thousands of other city workers.

## CUNY TOP GUN GETS MASSIVE PAY RAISE

BY DANIEL TASPININ

On Oct. 27, four months after the contentious vote to raise tuition, the City University's Board of Trustees adopted a resolution to hike Chancellor Matthew Goldstein's compensation package by \$100,000. The chancellor now has an annual pay of \$440,000.

"In sum, the proposed increase in the chancellor's compensation is richly deserved, necessary for CUNY to remain competitive and affordable," the resolution text states.

CUNY Board of Trustees Chairman Benno Schmidt echoed those sentiments to a *New York Post* reporter. Others are wondering if the increases make any sense given these days of fiscal austerity.

"Our complaint is that the raise was made at a time when there's no offer of salary increases to faculty," said Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the faculty and staff union. At the time of Goldstein's raise, PSC was participating in Campus Equity Week, an effort to raise awareness of issues of "contingent" (non-tenured) faculty in higher education.

Bowen pointed out that more than half of the classes at CUNY are taught by so-called part-time instructors who are overworked and underpaid.

Students were less diplomatic. "They're practicing racism and ripping us off," a Hunter College student asserted, contrasting the mostly working-class, people-of-color background of CUNY students with the elite, upper-class backgrounds of the Republican-appointed board.

Last June, CUNY trustees approved steep tuition hikes for students at all campuses. Goldstein recommended the increases, arguing that cuts by Gov. George Pataki in the university's staffing budget left the trustees no other option. Goldstein was appointed to the board by Pataki.

CITY

# LANDMARK CLUB BATTLES NYU REAL ESTATE MOGULS



BY RYAN NUCKEL

On Oct. 23, a Manhattan civil court judge granted a 30-day reprieve to the Greenwich Village nightclub the Bottom Line, buying the club some time to avoid eviction by its landlord, New York University (NYU).

The club's lease expired in September, and its legal battle with NYU — to which the club owes \$185,000 in back rent — has won it support from local residents and celebrity musicians who once graced its stage.

Bruce Springsteen — who performed at the Bottom Line before hitting the big time — pledged his support and the donation of an unnamed sum if an agreement can be reached. "When I think of the most memorable nights in my own career, few match the week of shows we did there in 1975," said Springsteen on [www.savethebottomline.com](http://www.savethebottomline.com).

"As a musician, as a citizen, and as one who loves New York City, I truly hope that a solution can be found."

Sirius Satellite Radio has pledged to donate the full amount of back rent and to create a

\$10,000 scholarship for NYU students as a "sign of good faith."

The fight over the future of the Bottom Line, however, is only the latest incident in a long history of disputes between NYU and the surrounding neighborhood. Over the last three decades, as NYU has made the transition from a middle-class commuter school to an elite residential "research university," its expansion has made it one of New York City's biggest landowners.

Last year, NYU caused controversy with its construction of a dormitory on 2nd street and Bowery, right next door to CBGB, the legendary club that many consider the birthplace of punk rock. Two years earlier, in 2000, NYU built a dormitory on the site of the old Palladium club on 14th Street, once home to artists as diverse as Tito Puente and the Clash.

In each case, residents eager to preserve the historic architecture of downtown Manhattan have been set against a large private institution more concerned with its own future than the city's past.

NYU has tried to lure students into supporting the eviction by promising to convert the space into large classrooms. The recent transformation of a student performance space on West 4th into a Starbucks, however, doesn't exactly bode well for the promise being kept.

Negotiations between the club and NYU continue, but NYU's demand that any new lease be accompanied by a nearly 200 percent rent increase indicates that despite the recent reprieve and celebrity support, the Bottom Line is still fighting an uphill battle.

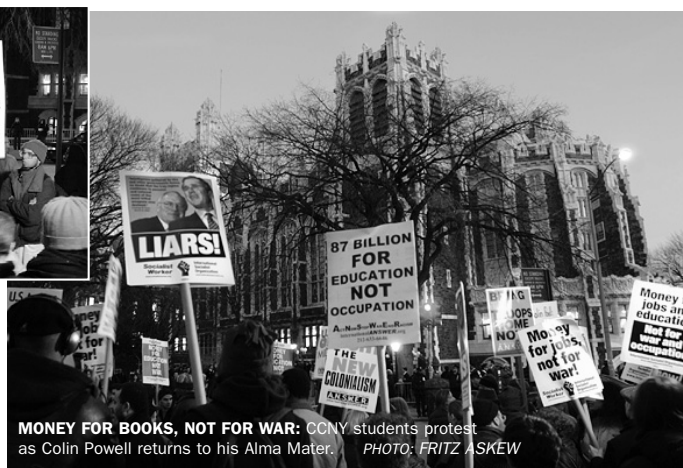


## CCNY STUDENTS GIVE POWELL A BRONX CHEER

BY JOHN TARLETON

When Secretary of State Colin Powell graduated from the City College of New York (CCNY) in 1953 tuition was free.

When he returned to his Alma Mater on Nov. 10 to speak at the Colin Powell Center for Policy Studies about democracy in the Middle East, he was greeted by a couple



hundred protesters, many of them students still reeling from budget cutbacks and a 40 percent tuition increase during a time of record military budgets.

"It's great he got a free education when he came here," said CCNY junior Rodolfo Leyton. "But now he's giving all the money to help finance war and destruction and killing." Leyton's financial aid was reduced this year. He currently works two jobs and goes to school full-time.

Tanya Thurman, a CCNY junior from Staten Island, spoke of her older brother who joined the Marines four years ago and has fought in Afghanistan and Iraq and may soon be returned to Iraq for a second tour of duty.

"He's been broken by his experience," she said. "He's a different person. He was a sweet, sensitive, funny guy. Now, he's a tall, brawny machine."

Nick Power, a CCNY Professor of African-American Literature and World Humanities, saw Powell at a reception before he gave his speech. He said Powell was still a role model for some young African-Americans but "a warning of what not to be" to many others.

"Just as one human being noticing another, he's tired," Power said. "He'd be better off if he took off the mask. I knew the Left was right when I saw that Colin Powell doesn't sleep at night."

BY CATRIONA STUART  
AND F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

**M**ention Columbia University to Ada Rodriguez and it doesn't take long before she gets upset.

"They are destroying my life," laments a tearful Rodriguez. "Columbia violated my rights and a lot of other families' rights. In the end I see myself out on the street."

After buying the apartment building in Morningside Heights where her family has lived for more than four decades, the university began to pressure residents like 55-year-old Rodriguez to move out in order to make room for students — favored tenants who could afford the steep rent increases and were willing to live in subdivided apartment units.

Following decades of struggle against Columbia's numerous expansion plans, Harlem and Morningside Heights residents find themselves facing the prospect of an even greater university presence as Columbia prepares to build a 17-acre Arts and Life Sciences campus. The "Manhattanville" campus would extend roughly from 125th to 133rd Streets, and be bounded by Broadway and 12th Avenues. Before any development can begin, the university must first convince several city and district government bodies to approve rezoning the area for "mixed usage." The area is currently designated for manufacturing use.

At meetings and staged events across the city, activists and community members like Rodriguez have expressed strong opposition to the expansion plans, which they see as something that will gentrify the neighborhood to the detriment of its long-term residents.

"It threatens the survival of the community," says Kenny Schaeffer, a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Society and a longstanding critic of Columbia's expansion. "For a century Harlem has been the heart of the African-American community in the city — and in some ways, the country — but that's been chipped away enormously. The city has a scandalous housing affordability crisis that's seriously impacting Harlem. For Columbia University also to put pressure on Harlem residents resonates with that issue."

But faced with a burgeoning student population and the rapid development of new fields of study, Columbia insists that it must expand in order to remain competitive with comparable Ivy League institutions. Brandishing figures that rank it as holding the lowest square footage per student and citing difficulty in finding affordable housing options as a hindrance to attracting top faculty, Columbia seems intent on moving ahead with building plans.

#### AN EXPANDING EMPIRE

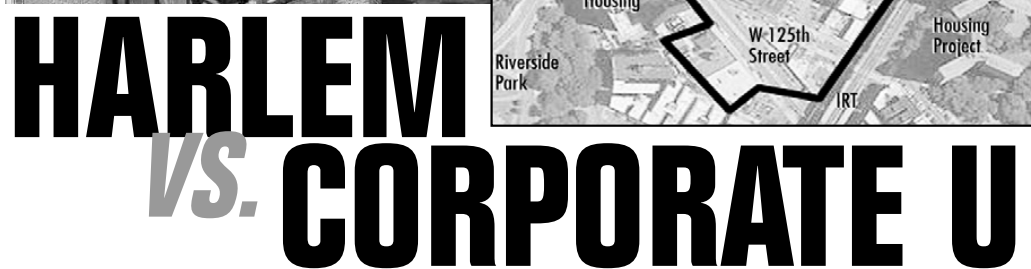
Last February, Columbia President Lee Bollinger announced the beginning of a one-year campus planning study to identify ways to expand its four locations — including the flagship 32-acre Morningside Heights campus — and to make inquiries into off-campus development.

In July, the university publicized its plans for the Manhattanville campus. Since then, Columbia representatives have held a series of closed-door meetings with city, state, and district elected officials in an effort to gain approval for the project.

Over the past several decades, the Harlem community has witnessed Columbia's gradual, gentrifying spread along Broadway from 103rd Street upward, leaving a swath of new construction, deregulation and subdivision of previously affordable housing units.

With concrete plans for the new campus expected to be released in early 2004, long-time area residents like Tom Capner of the 120th, 121st Street Block Association are wary of this latest race for space and are making their concerns known.

"There is no question that Columbia has been critical in generating the desperate housing shortage in our community," said Capner, a panelist at a recent student-run



## HARLEM VS. COLUMBIA

### LOCALS TAKE ON LAND-HUNGRY COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

forum on the ethics of Columbia's expansion. He represented the residents of 10 buildings owned by the university.

"During the fifties and sixties," he continued, "there were mass evictions of those Columbia labeled as undesirables... today there is a doublestandard in how Columbia treats its tenants. The elderly, the poor and people of color are pressured and harassed whenever possible."

Responding to the panel, Columbia's off-campus housing department manager, Bill Scott, conceded there are repercussions to university expansion, "Over time the proportion of Columbia people increases, housing is [deregulated] with preference going to faculty, staff or students."

However, Scott asserts that if Columbia does not provide additional housing units, prospective university-associated tenants will be competing on the open market with area residents for available housing, eventually requiring the construction of more housing to meet demand and rapidly increasing rents in the interim.

#### THE COALITION TO PRESERVE COMMUNITY

That is little consolation for local residents. The rapid loss of affordable housing has become a call to arms for numerous uptown residents, tenant associations, local organizations and non-profit groups. They have come together to form the Coalition to Preserve Community (CPC).

Created in response to the latest round of completed Columbia capital projects, the coalition has become a central voice in the clamor of opposition to the proposed Manhattanville campus.

Within the past few months, Columbia has opened a 12-story building at 110th Street to house commercial space, a 650-student private elementary school, and 27 three- and four-bedroom apartments for Columbia faculty as well as a new Law School dormitory on 121st Street. Further west on 121st St., the university is in the final stages of completing a \$50 million

building for the School of Social Work, and is beginning construction of a residence hall at 103rd Street.

The two 121st Street sites were once home to six residential buildings housing 150 families, a detail not mentioned on the university's construction information web site, which is supposed to inform the community of projects that may affect them.

Mention of the Manhattanville proposal is also notably absent from that website.

Says Leah Yananton, a Columbia senior and area resident associated with the coalition, "Columbia will expand because they are a multi-billion-dollar organization. There is no stopping them. But we can make sure that they do it without obliterating the community."

To that end, the CPC has released a proposal, which, among other points, includes provisions for full disclosure and transparency in all short-term and long-term acquisition and development projects, a moratorium on Columbia's conversion of rent-regulated apartments, and the commitment of half of all newly constructed apartments for low and moderate-income housing.

#### COLUMBIA RESPONDS

Aware of the ire frequently raised by its expanding empire, Columbia has created a Community Advisory Committee for Campus Planning in an effort to incorporate community concerns at the planning stage and mitigate the fears surrounding such large projects.

But opponents of the plan insist that the university's efforts have been superficial. In an open letter, the coalition called Columbia's efforts at community inclusion "a sophisticated, well-heeled public relations operation that functioned to provide the appearance of community input in order to avoid having to address the destructive consequences of Columbia's continued unrestrained expansion."

Others, like Nellie Bailey of the Harlem Tenants Council, declare that with long-time activists excluded from the Committee, the

composition of the Advisory Committee reflects neither the scope of community criticism nor the composition of the community.

"We want our issues not only to be represented, but we want them on the table in those back rooms and board rooms," she said.

If the past is any indication of the way Columbia plans to deal with the current imbroglio then Bailey's concerns are well founded.

#### THE SPIRIT OF '68

In the tumultuous year of 1968, Columbia broke ground on a new physical fitness facility inside the bounds of Morningside Park: 85 percent to be designated for university affiliates and 15 percent for community use. Never intending interaction between the mostly white student body and the mostly black community, however, the plans included provisions for segregated entrances and an interior wall to divide the two populations.

Charged with racial undertones, the construction enraged student and community groups, and spurred major protests as fences were torn down from the building site. The so-called "Gym-Crow" affair became a focal point for a massive student strike and the takeover of Hamilton Hall.

Though the demographics of the surrounding community have changed some since the 1960s, Columbia still has a knack for enraging its neighbors.

At recent festivities for the university's 250th anniversary — complete with an enormous plywood birthday cake — a group of some 30 protesters braved rain and frigid temperatures to bring their message to the Columbia community.

Banging on everything from frying pans to hand drums, the group chanted slogans like, "Hey Columbia, what do you say, how many homes have you taken away?" Their resolve demonstrates that despite mounting institutional momentum the concerns of locals will not easily be buried beneath a bulldozer's blade.

Forget for a moment about quagmire, the growing heaps of American and Iraqi dead, the rebellious population. George Bush, Paul Bremer and gang have pulled off the biggest heist in history. They and no one else own 100 billion barrels of crude oil – a windfall of at least \$3 trillion – along with the entire assets and resources of Iraq.

By A.K. GUPTA

# THE LOOTING OF IRAQ

## HOW BUSH AND BREMER HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES TITLE TO ALL OF IRAQ'S

Since March of 2003, a series of executive orders by Bush, U.N. documents, and regulations and orders issued by Iraqi Proconsul Paul Bremer have put the U.S. in absolute control of the state of Iraq, its oil industry and monies, all while lifting barriers to repatriating profits.

In the name of reconstruction and security, the Bush administration has essentially granted itself the power to use the wealth of the Iraqi people as it sees fit. (Never mind that the new "fiscal matrix" in Iraq violates international law: a fact of little concern to the White House when the whole war was illegal to begin with.)

The largest contracts have gone to corporations like Halliburton, Bechtel and Fluor, which are big contributors to the Republicans and now enjoy oversight of their Iraq activities by former executives who now sit in the Bush administration. Furthermore, Bush has given the corporate victors the ultimate protection: indemnifying from liability for any and all activities related to Iraqi oil.

To top it all off, the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq is using money from oil sales to help pay for the counterinsurgency campaign. So not only are U.S. corporations reaping billions off the conflict in sweetheart deals with legal impunity, but Iraqis are being forced to pay for the very war being waged against them.

The story begins in February 2003 when the U.S. Agency for International Development secretly asks six companies to bid on a reconstruction contract worth at minimum \$900 million. The six – Bechtel, Fluor, Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root, Louis Berger Group, Parsons and Washington Group International – were all generous supporters of the Republicans, having given them a combined \$2.3 million between 1999 and 2002.

As the war is launched, Bush issues Executive Order 13290 on March 20. It mandates the confiscation of "certain property of the Government of Iraq and its agencies, instrumentalities, or controlled entities, and that all right, title, and interest in any property so confiscated should vest in the Department of the Treasury." Practically, this means the Bush administration seizes \$1.7 billion in Iraqi funds.

On March 24, the Army Corps of Engineers awards a no-bid contract to Kellogg Brown & Root to fight oil fires and assess and repair Iraq's oil infrastructure. Two days after U.S. forces topple Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad, the Corps mentions KBR's contract has a ceiling of \$7 billion.

To pay for the war, Congress passes a \$78.5 billion bill on April 14, setting aside \$2.5 billion for the creation of an Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund.

On April 17, U.S. AID awards Bechtel a \$680 million contract to rebuild everything in Iraq – power plants, water and sewage systems, airports, seaports, hospitals, schools, government buildings, irrigation structures and transport links.

On May 8, one week after Bush's carrier landing that marked the end of "combat operations," the U.N. ambassadors from the United Kingdom and United States send a letter to the Security Council establishing their governments' authority over Iraq. They list among their many tasks "detering hostilities [and] maintaining civil law and order."

The feeble, battered United Nations passes Resolution 1483 on May 22, endorsing the "specific authorities, responsibilities, and obligations" of the United States and United Kingdom, as "occupying powers," and specifically citing the May 8 letter. The Resolution notes the "establishment of a Development Fund for Iraq to be held by the Central Bank of Iraq," and decides that 95 percent of "all export sales of petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas from Iraq... shall be deposited into the Development Fund for Iraq." For start-up, the U.N. bequeaths the Fund with \$1 billion from the

Oil-for-Food program.

As for the Fund, Resolution 1483 notes the monies "shall be disbursed at the direction of the Authority," meaning Paul Bremer, who was appointed Proconsul 16 days earlier.

Bremer for his part is perched in Baghdad's Republican Palace issuing Regulations, "instruments that define the institutions and authorities of the Coalition Provisional Authority," and Orders, "binding instructions or directives to the Iraqi people that create penal consequences or have a direct bearing on the way Iraqis are regulated."

Regulation No 1 establishes Bremer's absolute authority in Iraq as CPA Administrator effective May 16. Regulation No 2 concerns the Development Fund. It defines the Administrator as the one who "Oversees and controls the establishment, administration and control of the Fund for and on behalf of the Iraqi people, and directs disbursements from the Fund."

It cites Resolution 1483 in noting: "the Development Fund for Iraq shall be used in a transparent manner to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, for the economic reconstruction and repair of Iraq's infrastructure, for the continued disarmament of Iraq, and for the costs of Iraqi civilian administration."

But in direction violation of U.N. Resolution 1483, Bremer mandates that the Fund "shall be held in an

account... in the [U.S.] Federal Reserve Bank." The United Nations had intended that the money go directly to the Central Bank of Iraq.

Bremer signs Regulation No 3 into effect on June 15 setting up the Program Review Board. It states: "The Board shall be responsible for recommending expenditures of resources from the Development Fund for Iraq" and all the other funds provided to the CPA, such as the various monies from Iraq seized by the Bush administration and funds provided by Congress.

On the same day U.N. resolution 1483 passed, May 22, Bush signs Executive Order 13303 granting blanket immunity to any U.S. corporation dealing with Iraqi oil through 2007. Researcher Jim Vallette, who stumbled across the order in the Federal Register, says it "unilaterally declares Iraqi oil to be the unassailable province of U.S. corporations."

"In other words, if ExxonMobil or ChevronTexaco touch Iraqi oil, it will be immune from legal proceedings in the United States."

On May 25 Bremer issues Order No 4. After "Recognizing that the assets and property of the Iraqi Baath Party constitute State assets" Bremer orders that all Baath Party assets and property "are subject to seizure by the CPA."

So in a little more than two months the Bush administration stakes claim to and receives U.N. approval to every asset

## PRECISELY WHAT IS PAUL BREMER AND THE COALITION

That's a \$160 billion question (and counting). Congress appropriated around \$150 billion for the war and reconstruction in Iraq. Of that, the CPA has received some \$3 billion in two separate funds – the Relief and Reconstruction Fund and a Natural Resource Fund. Another \$20 billion is on the way for 2004.

On its website, the CPA has released bits of information on expenditures (and even less on how decisions were made). This lack of transparency has led to widespread criticism. In a scathing report dated Oct. 23, British NGO Christian Aid charged "the billions of dollars of oil money that has already been transferred to the US-controlled Coalition Provisional Authority has effectively disappeared into a financial black hole."

The CPA has so far received \$5 billion in Iraqi money and is expected to add another \$4 billion by the end of the year. Bremer released a budget on July 7 for July to December 2003 that called for \$6.1 billion in expenditures and forecasted a \$2.2 billion deficit. By October the deficit was up to \$3 billion due to the shortfall in oil revenues from resistance attacks. But only \$2.6 billion of the budget will be channeled through the Iraqi ministries.

The budget lumps together the U.S. and Iraqi funds as revenue sources. The CPA also subtracts out \$1.2 billion for prior expenditures without ever explaining what they were. And it mentions in a footnote that some \$900 million will be funded off line. All told, \$5.5 billion remains unaccounted for.

Nonetheless, revealing information can be gleaned from official documents and media reports. An examination of expenditures reveals Bremer is lavish to foreign contractors while miserly to Iraqis. Since coming under fire, the CPA has released some data on what it's doing with Iraq's oil money, but it has refused to establish proper auditing oversight as mandated in U.N. Resolution 1483, so it's still unknown how decisions are being made.

**\$120 MILLION WAS SPENT ON A NEW IRAQI CURRENCY** despite the fact that Iraq has a currency press. This decision is typical of the CPA process. Rather than repair the dilapidated and looted Baghdad mint so the country can retain valuable infrastructure and jobs, the job is outsourced to British security company De La Rue, which prints the currency of 125 nations. It also happens to be one of the largest owners of electronic voting machines in the United States, and is linked to the Carlyle Group, which is thick with former officials from the Reagan and first Bush administration.

### **\$105 MILLION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO U.S. UNDER THE "COMMANDERS EMERGENCY"**

Officially the program is part of the "reconstruction" used as an integral component in the guerrilla volatile town of Ramadi says "CONTRACTS ARE CONTROL." Lt. Col. Hector Mirabile explained to resistance attack he'll pressure local leaders to reduce their contracts. The commander of the 1st sentiment, saying "Money is the most powerful. But numerous criticisms are being raised. For one and most of the contracts are no-bid. Second, ifers have the technical skills to properly evaluate between combat and humanitarian aid, which mizations at greater risk of attack; something that in Iraq. Most troubling, it seems U.S. forces are pressure them into collaborating with the occup

### **\$51 MILLION IS APPROVED FOR A PROGRESS CLEANER & BRIGHTER IRAQ**

– a public 300,000 men at \$3 a day to clean streets and goes to local subcontractors, however, who skin those workers who complain.

### **\$51 MILLION IS APPROVED TO SHIP THE DISTRIBUTE IT WITHIN IRAQ.**

It's unclear to distribute the bills to 250 "centers," main media report heavily armed U.S. troops guarding ty guards are also present delivering the bills. It spent on foreign mercenaries, many of them for diers, to guard the money. The foreign guns in Ir whereas Iraqi forces being trained by the U.S. re And even the \$51 million is not enough; CPA off million on Oct. 21 to cover "additional transport

\*Adding insult to irony, **CPA OFFICIALS DECID IRAQ'S OIL FUND TO PAY THE COST OF SHI**



# IRAQ

## ASSETS



### REGULATION NO 1:

establishes Bremer's absolute authority in Iraq as CPA Administrator effective May 16.

### REGULATION NO 2:

defines the Administrator as the one who "Oversees and controls the establishment, administration and control of the Fund for and on behalf of the Iraqi people, and directs disbursements from the Fund."

### REGULATION NO 3:

"The (Program Review) Board shall be responsible for recommending expenditures of resources from the Development Fund for Iraq" and all the other funds provided to the CPA.

### ORDER NO 4:

After "Recognizing that the assets and property of the Iraqi Baath Party constitute State assets" Bremer orders that all Baath Party assets and property "are subject to seizure by the CPA."

### ORDER NO 12:

Lifting "All tariffs, custom duties, import taxes, licensing fees and similar surcharges for goods entering or leaving Iraq."

The Ex-Im Bank (as it's called) went on to explain that "support may be available for transactions where... the primary source of repayment is the Development Fund for Iraq, or another entity established under the auspices of the Coalition Provisional Authority."

The sole purpose of the Ex-Im Bank is to help "finance the sales of U.S. exports, primarily to developing markets, by providing guarantees, export credit insurance, and loans." Thus, in the case of Iraq, the Bank will provide credit for purchases for goods and services authorized by Bremer - including all of Bechtel and Halliburton's contracts.

This is amplified by CPA Order No 20 from July 17, establishing the Trade Bank of Iraq. Its purpose is to provide "financial and related services to facilitate the importation and exportation of goods and services to and from Iraq." Money to support the trade bank comes from Iraq's oil money, yet another instance of public monies being used unaccountably for private profit.

In the same order Bremer bestows upon himself the power to "promulgate additional regulations, orders, memoranda or other documentation that further define the purpose of the DFI." This is legalese for Bremer saying he can do whatever he wants with the fund.

Bush issues Executive Order 13315 on Aug. 28, deeming "that it is in the interest of the United States to confiscate certain additional property of the former Iraqi regime, certain senior officials of the former regime, immediate family members of those officials, and controlled entities." Essentially this allows the Bush administration to nab whatever Iraqi money it hasn't already laid its hands on.

Bremer gives corporations another gift in Order No 37 by instituting a flat tax. He decrees on Sep. 15, "The highest individual and corporate income tax rates for 2004 and subsequent years shall not exceed 15 percent." This also implies that the tax could be set much lower as 15 percent is just the ceiling.

On Sep. 19 Bremer issues Order No 39 on Foreign Investment. In a stroke, Bremer writes, "This Order replaces all existing foreign investment law." All sectors of the economy apart from oil and gas are opened to foreigners "on terms no less favorable than those applicable to an Iraqi investor."

Iraq went overnight from having one of the most closed economies in the world to one of the most open. A press release dated Sep. 21 from Iraqi Minister of Finance Kamel al-Gailani enthusiastically lists among the law's new provisions the "full and immediate remittance of profits, dividends, interest and royalties."

The neoliberal wish list was now complete. Even as U.S. forces struggle to establish a security matrix to contain the growing Iraqi insurgency, Bush and Bremer have put in place a fiscal matrix to extract Iraq's enormous riches unhindered.

and resource Iraq has in the world, establishes sole power over how to spend Iraq's oil money and indemnifies its corporate cronies from liability.

But the work has just begun. During the next few months as the resistance heats up Bremer fulfills the wildest dreams of every capitalist by eliminating virtually all barriers to the flow of capital, and throwing in a flat tax to boot.

The plan was actually outlined in a secret U.S. AID document issued Feb. 21 and later leaked to the media. Entitled, "Moving the Iraqi Economy from Recovery to Sustainable Growth," it calls for "mass privatization" of state-owned enterprises, trade liberalization, changing laws to favor the "repatriation of capital" and foreign investment in Iraq, and shifting the tax burden from business to consumers.

In a move that hardly bodes well for sustainable growth, Bremer issues CPA Order No 12 on June 8, which lifts "All

tariffs, custom duties, import taxes, licensing fees and similar surcharges for goods entering or leaving Iraq."

The order unleashes a flood of imported goods that leaves Iraq's worn-out manufacturers unable to compete, pushing them to the brink of insolvency. As for state-owned enterprises, which employ about 100,000 workers, Bremer decides it's better to pay the workers to sit around and do nothing than breed more anti-American sentiment by eliminating their jobs. Even then, in a guide for the 2004 budget, the CPA warns the enterprises that their budgets "should be prepared on the basis that the salaries of employees of SOEs will not be funded from 1 January 2004."

On June 19 the Export-Import Bank of the United States announces it is "prepared to immediately start processing applications for exports to Iraq," including "subcontractors providing goods and services to Iraq under USAID contracts."

## PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY DOING WITH ALL THE MONEY THEY'VE BEEN ALLOCATED?

### MILITARY COMMANDERS' RESPONSE PROGRAM.

"Operation" effort, but it's being war. A commander in the **IE OUR NO. 1 METHOD OF** to Newsweek that after a to provide information or he'll 101st Airborne, echoes this "ammunition we have." One there is little oversight few of the military command-e bids. Third, it blurs the line many NGOs say put aid organi-t has been devastatingly true e using Iraqis' own money to ation.

**RAM CALLED "TOWARD A** works project to employ haul away debris. The money m \$1 off the top and fire

**NEW CURRENCY TO AND** why so much money is need-ly banks. Even though the g the exchanges, other securi-: turns out millions are being mer British and American sol-raq cost up to \$1,500 a day ceive as little as \$5 a day. ficials approved another \$9 ation and support costs."

**ED ON OCT. 28 TO USE** IPPING IRAQ'S MONEY

**BACK TO IRAQ** after having deposited the oil money in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York - in violation of U.N. Resolution 1483.

**\$2.4 MILLION ON NEW KALISHNAKOV'S.** U.S. forces have seized huge caches of assault rifles, including tens of thousands of new AK-47s in Tikrit alone, according to a report in the L.A. Times. But the CPA decided to purchase 40,000 rifles anyway. It's suspected that the winner is a Polish company as a way to reward Poland for leading a multinational division in Iraq.

**\$250 MILLION A MONTH TO IMPORT FUELS INTO OIL-RICH IRAQ.** The failure of the CPA to reconstruct Iraq has led to **FUEL SHORTAGES** - gasoline, diesel and cooking gas. Congressman Henry Waxman accuses Halliburton with price gouging by charging up to \$2.62 a gallon whereas Iraqis pay less than \$.15 a gallon for the same gas.

The CPA has **PURCHASED ELECTRICAL POWER FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, SPENDING AT LEAST \$16 MILLION IN THE PROCESS.**

**\$23 MILLION BUDGETED TO REBUILD A CEMENT FACTORY.** Instead, Iraqis did it for barely 1 percent of the cost, about \$250,000. (The interest in cement is for huge blast barriers to ring occupation facilities.)

It's estimated there are **20,000 PRIVATE CONTRACTORS IN IRAQ SUPPORTING THE OCCUPATION**, including thousands of former Special Forces soldiers. Some are **GUARDING BAGHDAD AIRPORT UNDER A \$17 MILLION CONTRACT.** Others from the British mercenary company Erinyes are training members of the Facilities Protection Services to protect oil pipelines under a **\$45 MILLION CONTRACT.** The biggest mercenary contract was landed by **DYNCORP, WORTH \$480 MILLION FOR TRAINING A NEW POLICE FORCE.** Even the moribund Iraqi Governing Council was outraged when it was revealed that training will occur in Jordan, ensuring Iraq receives no economic benefits from the funds.

Huge sums of money are also being spent to equip new Iraqi militias.

**\$8 MILLION APPROVED JUST FOR EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT FOR THE NEW BORDER PATROL** by the CPA on Oct. 18. In the 2003 budg-

**et \$81 MILLION IS ALLOCATED FOR "SECURITY EQUIPMENT FOR OPERATING NEW PRISONS."** This doesn't include tens of millions in "life support" or recruiting costs for the militias as well as millions for the repair and reconstruction of prison facilities, one of the few boom industries in the new Iraq.

**\$90 MILLION WAS SET ASIDE FOR POLICE EQUIPMENT**, including millions for 9mm Glocks. Yet the months-long process in shipping and distributing goods in Iraq means that many Iraqi police remain unarmed even as the country is awash with weapons.

**\$12 MILLION TO PURCHASE 10,000 POLICE RADIOS** at a princely \$1,200 per unit approved by the CPA on Oct. 11.

As for projects that might truly benefit Iraqis, the allocations are peanuts in many cases, such as \$118,200 for housing and construction in Basrah, \$3,500 to pay the stipends for a Baghdad theater festival or \$400,000 for the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

What makes Iraqis especially indignant is that theirs is a nation of engineers and scientists who are left to watch as the billions in reconstruction funds go outside their country. During Iraq's heyday in the 1970s Iraqis were known as the Germans of the Middle East for their technical prowess.

Bechtel, for example, has an omnibus contract for reconstruction, but has only provided jobs for 40,000 Iraqis through subcontractors. This doesn't even make the barest dent in the 70 percent unemployment rate, which has left about 5 million Iraqis unemployed.

Rather than rebuild Iraq's infrastructure so it can be independent (and likely an economic powerhouse in the region), the Bush plan is to sell Iraq's assets off like a fire sale.

Iraqis can see that their country is being divided among the victors and that the only reconstruction taking place is projects that serve U.S. security interests. Iraq is slipping out of the Bush administration's control because it doesn't want to let Iraqis control their own economic or political future. That's what's fueling the resistance, not Saddam loyalists or tribal codes of honor.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## BREMER READY TO GRAB MILLIONS FROM TORTURED VETS

American officials in Baghdad are on the verge of recouping hundreds of millions of dollars in frozen Iraqi assets from an unlikely source: veterans of the 1991 Gulf War who were tortured by their captors. The vets won the money in a federal court case last year. Now the Bush administration is asking a judge to block the damages from being awarded. In a sworn court filing, L. Paul Bremer III, the American administrator in Iraq, said the money won by the former prisoners had already been "completely obligated or expended" in reconstruction efforts. "These funds are critical to maintaining peace and stability in Iraq," he said. "Restricting these funds as a result of this litigation would affect adversely the ability of the United States to achieve security and stability in the region."

## BORDERS BOOKS WORKERS HIT THE PICKETLINE

Chanting "I like books - not corporate crooks," nearly 40 employees at Borders flagship bookstore in Ann Arbor, Michigan walked out on strike on the morning of November 8 after rejecting management's "last and final offer." The union has called on the public to boycott all Borders bookstores, in addition to its affiliated companies, Walden Books and Amazon.com for the duration of the strike. Borders employees have asked for higher wages, better benefits and an end to workplace harassment. Borders employees start at between \$6 and \$7 an hour.

Borders has argued that the union is unnecessary and unwanted, claiming that it has a "special relationship" with its employees, pointing to the fact that only two out of the 400-plus stores in the chain are union organized. But Borders employees have their own explanation about why this is the case. One anonymous Ann Arbor employee explained to the *Michigan Daily*, "When you try to organize, you know that your career with Borders is over. I'm still working here, barely."

— ALEX HOGAN

## GUATEMALA TO EX-DICTATOR: GET LOST

Former military dictator Efraim Rios Montt finished a distant third in Guatemala's Nov. 9 presidential elections. Rios Montt, a born-again Christian with close ties to the Reagan administration was the leader of Guatemala from 1982-83 when tens of thousands of largely Mayan peasants were killed in a scorched-earth campaign against left-wing guerrillas. Former Guatemala City mayor Oscar Berger and Alvaro Colom advanced to a run-off round to be held on Dec. 28. Over 9,000 local and international observers were on hand for the election, the second held since the government and rebels signed a peace accord in 1996. The run-up to the election was marred by violence with at least 22 political assassinations.

## COPS DRAW GUNS IN CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL

Students at Stratford High School in Goose Creek, South Carolina received more than their usual education on November 6 when armed police stormed their school and ordered them to the floor to be searched at gunpoint for illegal drugs. Videotaped surveillance captured the entire incident on film.

No drugs were found.

## OCCUPATION

# RAMADAN IN PALESTINE

By Kristin Ess

**WEST BANK**— It is the first Friday of Ramadan. Upwards of 400 elderly Palestinians left their homes in Bethlehem this morning to travel the short distance to pray in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in east Jerusalem. This journey to the most significant mosque in Palestine should not take longer than 20 minutes. Hours later they had still not arrived.

A U.N. lawyer trying to leave Bethlehem in a U.N. issue jeep looked devastated and told me, "They used live fire. This is a group of old people. They shot a man in the head and a little boy saw it. I just saw him walking, his face is covered with tears."

Israeli soldiers closed the checkpoint leading from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. It is front-page news in *the Al Quds* this morning that Bethlehem is once again completely sealed. Israeli occupation forces never offer real reasons as to why, as if there could ever be reason enough to hold people captive in their towns and homes for years. The Israeli military only says that this is for their "security." For Israeli

security — in Palestine.

Security is not a question if one is sitting in a fortified tank or bulldozer, flying over a refugee camp in an Apache helicopter, or holding a gun at the head of an old man wanting to pray on the first Friday of Ramadan, his grandson's hand in his.

The Israeli soldiers at Bethlehem's northern checkpoint told the people no one could pass and they must return to their homes. A half hour later, after the people had not moved, soldiers said only people with "permission" could pass. A little while later soldiers said only those over 45 years old could pass. All the while, they did not let anyone through.

Some people began to pray on the ground at the checkpoint.

Other elderly people began to walk forward. As a young woman with tears in her eyes described it, "The people just refused to take it any more. They just started going."

Another eyewitness journalist describes the minutes that followed.

"Many of the people just went through. Some ran, others walked. The soldiers just lost control. They started shooting. And they shot tear gas and sound bombs. They were

beating people. They beat a man on the head with a rifle butt."

Israeli occupation forces shot tear gas and severely beat Palestinians at a checkpoint in the north-eastern part of Bethlehem days earlier. The roads leading in or out of Bethlehem, if not covered with Israeli soldiers and their jeeps and guns, have been dug up by Israeli bulldozers. All Bethlehem area residents are trapped. Many have not left the town in years.

One man remains seriously injured after being beaten. Several are handcuffed in the backs of jeeps, others are being held in the field next to the checkpoint. There are no reliable estimates on how many will be taken to Israeli prisons, or if they will be released.

As I walked away from the razor wire cutting into the ground in front of the checkpoint, roughly 35 elderly people were being lined up at gunpoint to wait their turn to walk through a new device at this checkpoint. Israeli forces have installed a metal detector placed 10 feet in the air where each person must stand alone, where he or she becomes a perfect target for Israeli sniper fire, and where everyone can see the humiliating search that ensues.

## ECONOMY

# FARMERS TRY THE FAIR TRADE SOLUTION

By Ashley Kidd

**C**overed in dust, half-intoxicated by gas fumes from the lightly equipped jeep which he rides through the Guatemalan highlands, Scott Patterson walks into a small church, only to find himself the object of scrutiny of some 20 people who have gathered there to wait for him. It's his third visit to a small organic coffee growers cooperative, but the farmers still act formally.

"They feel like it's a test," Patterson says, "that I'm the big buyer coming down" to evaluate them." Reintroducing himself, Patterson tells them about his business, and reiterates how he wants to establish a long-term relationship by continuing to buy from them directly.

Patterson helps run Minneapolis-based Peace

Coffee a fair-trade business that pays farmers a higher price for their product by eliminating middlemen (or "coyotes") who offer rock-bottom prices that farmers often feel compelled to accept. Currently, Patterson pays \$1.26 per lb compared to the market price of 57¢ but sells coffee at \$9.50 a lb., less than the \$11.45 fair trade version sold at Starbucks.

Darlene Scherer, owner of Gorilla Coffee in Brooklyn, says that not only do farmers receive a decent price for their product but that the fair price enables farmers to have money left over to diversify their crops, which "empowers them." Patterson's colleague at Peace Coffee, Melanee Meegan, agrees. As part of the Fair Trade agreement,



**FAIR TRADE** can provide a fair living for coffee farmers, such as these ones pictured in Mexico.

cooperatives must reinvest a small portion of their profit into their community. One cooperative in Guatemala, for example, decided to build a warehouse to store beans, which also doubles as a shelter for those who have made the daylong trip there, and need someplace to stay for the night.

Patterson says fair trade coffee represents about 1 percent of the overall coffee market and 3 percent of the specialty coffee market which includes organic and shade-grown coffees. Mike Burns, who convinced the supermarket chain Topps to sell fair trade coffee, says fair trade is the fastest-growing coffee market, though it will probably never constitute its bulk.

The crash in world coffee prices over the past 15 years has had a devastating effect on farmers in the global South, making coffee one of the most pressing Fair Trade issues. But many other goods — tea, chocolate, handicrafts, and, in the future, possibly bananas — are fair-traded as well.

Eric Rubin of the Florida Fair Trade Coalition hopes the fair-trade movement will be strengthened by the protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Miami later this month. Right now, European and American organizations set the fair-trade policies, saying, for example, that a certain amount of the profit must be returned to the communities, but "people from the global South are beginning to say that they should have a role in determining the policies that affect them," Rubin says.

Rubin hopes that through the workshops and networking that will occur in Miami, new ideas and projects that will transcend regional, and even national lines, will emerge.

## WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE... WHERE DO YOU TURN FOR NEWS?

Naomi Klein says *The Independent* "mixes the spirit of direct action with a searing critique of corporate power." Drawing upon the global network of Indymedia Centers, we let people speak for themselves — from the streets of Baghdad to the jungles of Colombia, the shantytowns of South Africa to the villages of East Timor. We look at those resisting the Pentagon and Wall Street reign of terror, from the fight at home for housing, quality education and civil liberties to the broader struggle against corporate globalization. Don't miss an issue—subscribe today!

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# DO ECONOMY GROWTH FIGURES HERALD 'BUSH BOOM'?

BY JIM KLICKE

The most widely watched measure of the economy, the Gross Domestic Product, jumped an amazing 7.2 percent in the just-ended third quarter. This number — which totals the market value of all goods and services produced in the United States — was the biggest increase since a 9.0 percent spurt at the start of 1984.

This is cold comfort, however, to the roughly 9 million workers currently unemployed and the millions of others so discouraged they have dropped out of the work force. These individuals — plus millions of new young and immigrant jobseekers entering the market each year — are vying for 3 million fewer jobs than the economy boasted when Bush took office.

According to preliminary figures, 41,000 jobs were lost during the same July-September period that the economy was supposedly growing 7.2 percent.

(The most recent jobs report indicates 126,000 jobs were created in October. While positive, the economy would have to produce jobs at twice that rate to bring down unemployment significantly. Even more troubling, workers re-entering the workforce are doing so in lower-paying jobs.)

Why are the numbers so upbeat when the job market is still struggling?

Numbers can be misleading. Quarterly GDP measurements are compared with the preceding quarter, and the difference is then multiplied by four to "annualize" the results. So while the Bureau of Economic Analysis touts an inspiring 9 percent rise in exports in third quarter GDP, it is really only a 2.3 percent increase over the preceding three month period — and if you look a year back, it's actually only a .1 percent increase.

Not so inspiring.

So the true change in the reported 7.2 percent rise in GDP is a mere 1.8 percent jump since June, a more reasonable figure.

Where did this growth come from? It turns out that 4.6 percent arose from increases

in "personal consumption expenditures."

Consumer spending increased 6.6 percent last quarter, and personal disposable income jumped about \$100 billion or 7.2 percent.

More than half of this increase was due to changes in the tax laws: a one-time early payout of the child tax credit, and a permanent decrease in the withholding rate.

Annualizing the quarterly figure quadruples the effects of the tax credit, though it occurs once, and moreover will result in lower consumer spending later when the tax credit would normally have been received. So the \$55 billion early payout has no net growth effect over a year (but serves well to confuse naive taxpayers into thinking they're getting a cut).

On the other hand, while growth in personal income from lower withholdings is permanent — the effect is overstated by a factor of four as this one-time increase is wrongly presumed to repeat each quarter for the next year when the overall figure is annualized.

It is important to note that much of the growth in spending was a result of domestic car sales, accounting for an amazing 1.17 percent of GDP growth, a figure that is not likely to be repeated as the market becomes tapped out. Roughly .5 percent of the growth is attributed to renewed computer equipment investment — a grossly inflated number that in real dollars amounts to only about a fifth of what is claimed in government statistics.

The result: roughly half the income growth isn't truly annual — so we're down to a more realistic figure of perhaps 4-5 percent, and after exceptional items, the number resembles something more like 3 percent annual GDP growth.

Big deal, last quarter it was 3.3 percent, and in the third quarter of last year it was 4 percent. So why all the excitement?

Maybe there isn't any.

The huge drop in inventories — .7 percent of GDP in this quarter alone — might indicate that retailers and manufacturers are looking at the economy more skeptically than the administration or its cheerleaders. They may for instance, be looking at the modest 2 percent annualized growth in wages and salary

income seen this last quarter.

Stagnant wages and low employment growth is not a recipe for increased sales (although interest, dividend and proprietor income is increasing strongly, two-thirds of overall income still goes to workers). In any event, this inventory decline will result in a lower GDP short-term as U.S. retailers turn to their Chinese manufacturers to restock their shelves.

Beyond dubious statistics and one-time income boosts and sales programs, there are several structural problems in the economy that could strangle the infant 'Bush boom' in its cradle and cause GDP to shrink for years.

Personal spending that has been the buoy keeping the economy afloat during the slowdown. Unusually pumped up over the last few years by a mortgage refinancing boom that has allowed homeowners to tap the equity in their homes for additional spending power, this refinancing spree depended on lower and lower interest rates. Unfortunately, this peaked a few months ago when long-term interest rates started to climb back up. According to Dean Baker of the Center For Economic and Policy Research, the current volume of such loans is only a quarter of what it was in May and June.

For this and other reasons, Baker says the fourth quarter is already looking bad. Beyond that, he maps out a scenario where long-term interest rates are bound to increase, whatever Alan Greenspan does at the Federal Reserve Board — presumably due to growing reluctance around the world to financing our massive and increasing governmental, corporate and consumer debt.

Higher interest rates in turn will puncture the housing bubble, which continues to be a big driver for the U.S. economy — residential fixed investment grew by 20 percent (annualized!) this quarter alone. At this point the bubble is only being sustained by investor psychology, with the fundamentals — such as record rental vacancies — already signaling a collapse. If this occurs, Baker foresees increases in unemployment and a possible double-dip recession.

## RNC WATCH

BY MIKE BURKE

I see the power of this being grandmas from Harlem, Palestinian teens from East New York and kids from the South Bronx coming and being on the street and showing first and foremost Bush does not represent New York City. To have New York City come out and say this would be a huge and powerful thing."

That's how William Etundi describes his vision of what the streets of New York may look like in nine months when the GOP rolls into town for its 2004 Republican National Convention, scheduled for Aug. 30 to Sep. 2.

Etundi is one of many New Yorkers who have begun organizing for the convention, which starts less than two weeks before the third anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

United For Peace and Justice, which organized the historic Feb. 15 anti-war protests, has already applied for a permit to hold a march and rally for up to 250,000 people on Sunday Aug. 29. Law enforcement officials are already preparing their response.

On July 8, Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge designated the convention to be a "national special security event." This puts the Secret Service — not the NYPD — in full control of security near Madison Square Garden.

"The Secret Service or the Bloomberg administration might seek to freeze streets or blocks or areas of the city and make it very difficult to protest," said Bill Dobbs, spokesperson for United For Peace and Justice, the coalition that organized the Feb. 15 protest in New York. "Already we are thinking how to plan ahead for all of that and one of the ways is to get that concern right out to the public and say: Beware because it is time to start asking questions about how police are going to handle protests next year."

Other groups have set up two websites to serve as the main clearinghouses for information on the convention: counterconvention.org and rncnotwelcome.org.

On the counterconvention site, over 60 groups have already signed on as organizing groups. And Etundi said organizers will make efforts to reach out to others in New York. "We really need to be engaged in the communities that are being affected," Etundi said.

### FROM IRAQ TO MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

The Republican National Convention has tapped Jim Wilkinson to serve as the director of communications for the convention, i.e., to serve as the party's main spinmaster. During the invasion of Iraq, Wilkinson served as director of strategic communications for Gen. Tommy Franks and was credited with playing a crucial role in crafting much of the war coverage including the "rescue" of Jessica Lynch.

Wilkinson, who once trained to be an undertaker, gained national attention in Florida where he worked for President Bush in the weeks following the contested 2000 election. When Republican operatives violently shut down a voter recount he told the Associated Press: "We find it interesting that when Jesse Jackson has thousands of protesters in the streets, it's O.K., but when a small number of Republicans exercise their First Amendment rights, the Democrats don't seem to like it. Since the Democrats have tried to reinvent election law, it's not surprising they have tried to reinvent the First Amendment."

But it appears the question may soon be: will Wilkinson and the GOP allow critics of President Bush to exercise their First Amendment rights on the streets of New York?

For more, see <http://mcwatch.blogspot.com>

## WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT?

### LOWER EAST SIDE

ABC No Rio  
156 Rivington

Bluestockings Books & Café 172 Allen

Lotus Cafe  
Clinton & Stanton

6th St. Community Center  
638 E. 6th St. (Ave. B)

### EAST VILLAGE

May Day Books  
155 First Ave.  
(btwn. 9th & 10th)

Kim's Video  
3rd Ave. & St. Marks Pl.

### SOHO

Housing Works  
126 Crosby St.

### NOHO

Mercer St. Books  
206 Mercer

### TRIBECA

In The Black  
King and Varick

### GREENWICH VILLAGE

Film Forum  
213 W. Houston

### WEST VILLAGE

LGBT Center  
213 W. 13th St.

### UNION SQUARE

Revolution Books  
9 W. 19th St.

### CHELSEA

Chelsea Sq. Diner  
23rd & 9th

### HELL'S KITCHEN

Second Wave Laundrocenr  
55th & 9th Ave.

### TIMES SQUARE

Chashama Theatre  
135 W. 42 & B'Way

### UPPER EAST SIDE

Hunter College  
68th & Lex, USG Office

### UPPER WEST SIDE

Labyrinth Books  
112th St. near B'way

### HARLEM

Riverside Church  
490 Riverside Dr. at 120th

Strictly Roots Restaurant  
123rd & Adam Clayton  
Powell Blvd.

### WOODSIDE

Queens Pride House  
6703 Woodside Ave.

### WASHINGTON HEIGHTS

Monkey Business  
187th & Ft. Washington Ave.

### BUSHWICK

Make the Road by Walking  
301 Grove St.

### WILLIAMSBURG

Clovis Books  
N. 4th St. & Bedford Ave.  
Spoonball & Sugartown Books  
218 Bedford Ave.

### PARK SLOPE

Community Book Store  
7th & Carroll Sts.

Tea Lounge  
7th Ave.

Park Slope Food Co-op  
782 Union St.

### COBBLE HILL

Tripoli Restaurant  
Atlantic & Clinton

### DOWNTOWN B'KLYN

Soft Skull Press  
7 Bond St. & State

### FORT GREENE

Pratt Area Community Council  
201 DeKalb Ave

### STATEN ISLAND

Muddy Cup Coffee House  
388 Van Duzen

### JERSEY CITY

Five Corners Branch Library  
off Journal Square

# DEAN, DIXIE & HITCHHIKING WITH THE KKK



BY JOHN TARLETON

A few years back I was stranded outside Opelika, Alabama, when a one-armed man pulled over on the side of the road.

"I know how hard it is to get a ride," he said. "I try to help people out."

Ray was making a long drive home from Florida and wanted someone to talk to. I hopped in his old beater and he immediately asked me what I thought of "the niggers" and the way they were ruining the country. I was noncommittal.

"Here, listen to this." He popped in a scratchy tape full of fiddle music. The lyrics were disturbing. I looked at the plastic cassette case — "The Louisiana KKK's Greatest Hits" — and took a deep breath.

Queers and "hairy-legged" feminists were right behind Blacks on Ray's hate list. He grumbled about the Los Angeles riots and vowed that he would never let a gay teacher in a classroom with his 8-year-old son. He talked enthusiastically about grand dragons and imperial wizards and other KKK esoterica. The windows were rolled down and his empty left sleeve flapped in the breeze. I asked what happened.

He said he lost his arm in an accident at the Haynes garment factory where he used to work. The equipment was old and defective. He had complained before the accident to his supervisor but to no avail. When he tried to sue his former employer, he couldn't find an attorney in the state of Alabama who would dare to buck the company.

"I have to go all the way to the middle of Florida to find me a lawyer who will take the case," he said.

So here he was — a middle-aged white man who had been betrayed and abandoned by white folks at all levels of the system. And who was he cursing with every other breath? Black people!

Maybe Ray was one of the folks Howard Dean had in mind when he recently ignited a mini-controversy by telling an Iowa newspaper that he wanted to broaden his campaign's appeal so that it could also reach men who drive pickup trucks with Confederate flags.

I grew up in the South and Confederate flags give me the willies. I wish they would disappear tomorrow. Dean should have known better than to casually

refer to a symbol that has caused people so much pain. But, I also know the tangled mix of reasons white Southerners cling to the Stars and Bars — regional pride, fear of the other, a desire to honor their ancestors' (misguided) sacrifices, nostalgia for a rustic, idealized past that was a nightmare for many, as well as unrepentant notions of white supremacy.

Dean's progressive politics are limited at best. People have good reason to wonder if he wasn't trying to send a signal to white Southerners as Reagan did with his 1980 "states' rights" speech in Philadelphia, Mississippi, where three young civil rights workers were martyred 16 years earlier, or Clinton in 1992 with his calculated disrespect of rap star Sistah Souljah, or Bush in 2000 with his visit to Bob Jones University, notorious for its ban on inter-racial dating.

But in this case, it appears the former Vermont governor is simply making a shrewd observation about how crazy and self-defeating it is for liberals to turn their noses up at poor Southern whites like Ray who flock to the polls to vote en masse for affluent Republican candidates.

As Dean told a meeting of Democrats in February "white folks in the South who drive pickup trucks with Confederate flag decals in the back ought to be voting with us and not them, because their kids don't have health insurance either and their kids need better schools, too."

The postmodern discourse of the cultural left emphasizes the symbolic over the substantive. While the battle over the Confederate flag gives the Republicans a chance to energize their Southern base, it gives Democrats the chance to posture on behalf of their most loyal voting bloc while not actually doing anything. So it's no surprise the other Democratic candidates quickly piled on Dean. John Kerry called Dean's comment "craven." Joseph Lieberman said it was "reckless." Al Sharpton said Dean sounded "more like Stonewall Jackson than Jesse Jackson." Dick Gephardt said "I will be the candidate for guys with American flags."

If only people were as outraged when blacks and whites are cynically played off against each other in these culture-war dustups.

For more stories from the road, see [johntraleton.net](http://johntraleton.net)

## LITERATURE

# HEMINGWAY'S AMERICA: THE GUN ALSO RISES

BY DONALD PANETH

The American dream has been transformed. Americans no longer dream of climbing the ladder to success.

They dream vaingloriously of victory in war. Yet, there will be no victory, and as Ford Madox Ford wrote, no more parades.

In American literature, war has been the big subject for more than a century now, from Ambrose Bierce to the novelists of the Vietnam conflict.

Stephen Crane wrote *The Red Badge of Courage* in 1895, without ever having taken part in or witnessed as much as a skirmish. Two years later, he covered the Greek-Turkish War for the *New York Journal* and the year after that, the Spanish-American War for the *New York World*. Other correspondents spoke of his coolness in the field, his indifference to bullets.

Crane published two volumes of sardonic, epigrammatic poetry, *Black Riders* (1895) and *War Is Kind* (1899).

"Great is the battle god, great, and his kingdom —

A field where a thousand corpses lie....  
He died of tuberculosis in 1900 at the age of 28.

Ernest Hemingway came through the early morning mist of the battlefield in 1918.

Hemingway returned to the front through-

out his life, as correspondent, short story writer, novelist and playwright.

He portrays war as pitiless and unsparing in four novels — *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), and *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950).

He upholds a code of grace under pressure, of doing the job at hand, whether its filing newspaper correspondence or blowing up a bridge to impede the advance of fascist troops.

In an episode of *A Farewell to Arms*, the retreat from Caporetto, Lieutenant Frederic makes his famous "separate peace," his response to the tragedies and absurdities of war.

"It was no point of honor," he thinks. "I was not against them. I was through... it was not my show any more."

Love is not a solution to general war in Hemingway's works. It does not survive.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake and Ashley love each other. He is incapacitated by a war



wound. They cannot be happy. Their despair is emblematic of the post-World War I period.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederic loves Catherine; she dies in childbirth.

In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan loves Maria; he perishes on a forested hillside, fighting a rearguard action.

In *Across the River and Into the Trees*,

Richard loves the girl; he dies of a heart attack while returning to Army duty after a weekend with her.

*Across the River* is a bitter book. Richard is a colonel of combat infantry. The girl encourages him to tell her about the soldier's profession. "Please keep on telling me." "Don't you see you need to tell me things to purge your bitterness?"

He tells her. He was a "spare-parts" colonel at the start, a replacement for colonels who had been killed or relieved; many had been relieved. He had been cagey, but not lucky. Napoleon had wanted them lucky — and he was right. But you

couldn't fight on luck. It was just something you needed. He got a regiment, and lost it. He tells her how he lost it, company by company.

The texture and tone of Hemingway's prose is consoling. It can actually help one to get through a lot, a remarkable virtue in a book these days.

*Across the River* received terrible reviews when it appeared in McCarthy-era America. The reason was to be found on page 227 where Hemingway writes:

"Now we are governed in some way by the dregs. We are governed by what you find in the bottom of dead beer glasses that whores have dunked their cigarettes in. The place has not even been swept out yet and they have an amateur pianist beating on the box." (President Harry S. Truman, who pushed things really downhill with his decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and who two years later backed the National Security Act requiring loyalty oaths from Executive Branch employees.)

Hemingway got it all down on paper which is the aim of the writer. He died in 1961 of a self-inflicted gun wound. He was 61.

Now the U.S. is at war in Afghanistan and Iraq. The American republic is coming into the home stretch, rounding the last post. Who will write the story?



# GRITOS EN SILENCIO

POR LYDIA NERI

FOTOGRAFÍAS POR LINA PALLOTTA

Una larga y silente procesión de mujeres y hombres vestidos de negro, recorrió este pasado 1º de noviembre en las calles de Nueva York, en una manifestación que comenzó frente al consulado de México, donde organizaciones e individuos mexicanos tomaron acciones claras y contundentes ante los asesinatos y desapariciones de cientos de niñas y jóvenes mujeres en Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.

Este fue uno de los muchos actos planeados para llevarse a cabo en diversas ciudades de México y Estados Unidos, como parte de la campaña que comenzó ese mismo día para denunciar la impunidad y presionar, a través de las demandas de la comunidad nacional e internacional, a los organismos mexicanos de los que depende se haga justicia y se llegue al fondo de esa profunda poza de oscuros vertederos.

El acto comenzó a las 11 de la mañana del Día de Muertos, día de particular importancia para los mexicanos, quienes a través de diversas ceremonias, ofrendas, danzas, cantos, procesiones y ritos, rinden tributo a la memoria de sus familiares y amigos muertos.

Muy temprano empezaron a llegar, no sólo mexicanos, había guatemaltecos, dominicanos, estadounidenses, chilenos, puertorriqueños y de varios países más, quienes fueron integrándose hasta hacer un homogéneo grupo que trabajó en colectivo y en silencio; como si supieran desde siempre lo que iban a hacer. Y entonces, recortaron fotos, armaron cruces con cartón y papel, pegaron las fotografías de las muchachas desaparecidas, se repartieron entre sí, rosas y margaritas amarillas, y cada cual cargó una cruz, escogió un nombre dentro de la larga lista y representó, durante todo el recorrido, a una o varias de las mujeres asesinadas. Algunos de ellos, cargaban pedazos de ropa íntima y de objetos personales en bolsas de plástico, emulando los "restos" (prueba del crimen) que la policía en Ciudad Juárez entrega a los familiares, como única evidencia con la que se identifica el "cuerpo" encontrado de las víctimas.

Esto fue algo más que un mitin, era como una comunión, un algo colectivo que no gritaba en voz alta consignas, pero que con la fuerza del silencio organizado demandaba justicia, y un rotundo ¡NO a la impunidad! Así, caminaron por las calles del centro de Manhattan, miembros de organizaciones como la Asociación Tepeyac, Justicia para Nuestras Hijas, Women in Black, Grupo de Trabajadoras por la Paz, Vamos a la Peña del Bronx, Red de Solidaridad con Venezuela, Mujeres Radicales, Action Center, Coatlícue Theatre Company, New York Zapatistas y otras muchas organizaciones hasta llegar al frente del edificio de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, donde se rompió el silencio y se manifestó abiertamente la solidaridad con las víctimas de los casos del feminicidio en Ciudad Juárez; el rechazo a la violencia contra las mujeres en todos los países del mundo, y el repudio ante la campaña de desprestigio y persecución contra los familiares de las víctimas y las organizaciones sociales que apoyan estas demandas.

Concluyó la marcha hacia las dos de la tarde, aún y cuando no pudo entregarse la carta dirigida al Cónsul de México, Arturo Sarukán, quien había asegurado que la Agregada de Prensa, Paloma Ojeda, estaría en las oficinas del consulado mexicano para recibirla.



## MUERTES INTOLERABLES

10 años de desapariciones y asesinatos en Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

- En los últimos 10 años han sido asesinadas en esa ciudad 370 mujeres, de las cuales al menos 137 fueron víctimas de agresión sexual antes de morir, mientras que 75 cadáveres aún no han sido identificados.
- El porcentaje mayor de asesinatos por edad, se encuentra entre 13 y 17 años.
- A muchas de estas mujeres las mantuvieron cautivas durante varios días y las sometieron a humillaciones, torturas y espantosas formas de violencia sexual antes de su muerte, la que, en la mayoría de los casos se produjo por asfixia causada por estrangulamiento o como consecuencia de palizas.
- Todos los cadáveres aparecieron ocultos entre escombros o abandonados en zonas desiertas de los alrededores de la ciudad.
- Un considerable número de mujeres desaparecidas o asesinadas, eran estudiantes o trabajaba en maquiladoras.
- Continúan desaparecidas 70 mujeres.

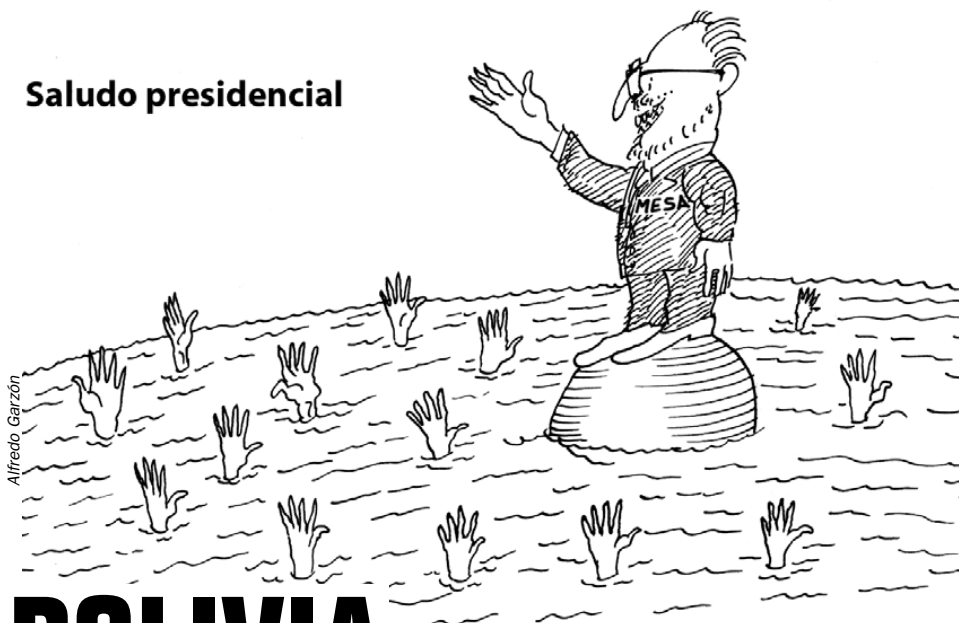
Fuente: Amnistía Internacional



# EL INDEPENDIENTE



## Saludo presidencial



# BOLIVIA PARA LOS BOLIVIANOS

POR SILVIA ARANA

El pasado mes de octubre indígenas y campesinos bolivianos lograron paralizar la exportación de gas a Estados Unidos, bloqueando rutas y tomando las calles de las principales ciudades del país andino. La chispa que encendió el fuego fue el plan del gobierno de otorgar a un consorcio de corporaciones multinacionales el proyecto de construcción de un gasoducto. Este gasoducto permitiría la exportación de gas natural a Estados Unidos, a través de Chile. La respuesta del gobierno de Sánchez de Lozada fue represión salvaje con un saldo de cerca de ochenta muertos. A la movilización de indígenas y campesinos se sumaron sectores de la clase media. El gobierno quedó completamente aislado y el sábado 18 de octubre el presidente Sánchez de Lozada presentó su renuncia y se exilió en Estados Unidos. El vicepresidente Mesa asumió la presidencia de Bolivia prometiéndolo un referéndum sobre el controversial proyecto de exportar gas a Estados Unidos.

Mesa buscó de inmediato un acuerdo con Evo Morales, el congresista del MAS y líder de los campesinos cocaleros que alcanzó el segundo lugar en las últimas elecciones presidenciales. Tanto Morales como Felipe Quispe, dirigente del movimiento indígena Pachakuti, han aceptado la tregua temporalmente, con reservas. (Ver discurso de Morales.)

Quispe dice que los pueblos indígenas sólo han recibido pobreza, racismo y degradación en manos de los blancos, quienes no han hecho más que robar los recursos naturales del país. Agrega que ha llegado la hora de levantarse contra 500 años de opresión (como lo hizo en enero del 2000 el pueblo indígena ecuatoriano logrando la renuncia del presidente Jamil Mahuad). En ese contexto histórico, la situación actual es la continuidad de lo que comenzó con la llegada de los españoles y la explotación del estaño, de la plata y otros minerales, extraídos con el trabajo forzado de los indígenas y exportados a

Europa. Los magnates de la minería siguieron explotando el trabajo indígena y sacando la riqueza del país. En esta etapa, con la privatización de las empresas estatales de bienes y servicios, y con la globalización implementada a través del ALCA y el FMI, se pretende continuar el ciclo de usurpación de los recursos naturales y degradación de los pueblos indígenas. Ya se había levantado el pueblo de Cochabamba contra el proyecto de privatización del agua logrando una gran victoria contra las corporaciones.

Queda por ver cuál será el desempeño del nuevo presidente, quién como vicepresidente de Sánchez de Lozada llegó al gobierno con una plataforma neoliberal y con el apoyo del embajador de Estados Unidos, cuya intromisión en los asuntos internos de Bolivia lo asemeja más a un Virrey que a un funcionario de un país extranjero.

Pachakuti, el MAS y otras agrupaciones si bien apoyaron la "salida constitucional" siguen exigiendo lo siguiente:

- La realización de una Asamblea General Constituyente que elabore una nueva constitución regida por el principio de soberanía nacional.
- La defensa de los recursos naturales y una política energética soberana. El gas es de los bolivianos y sus beneficios les pertenecen. Paralizar las negociaciones de la venta de gas; restituir el control estatal de la cadena productiva y desarrollar una industria nacional de hidrocarburos.
- Redistribución equitativa de las tierras.
- Soberanía alimentaria y desarrollo rural: Oposición a los tratados bilaterales y multilaterales contrarios a los intereses nacionales (en referencia al ALCA y a la destrucción de los cultivos de coca ordenados desde Washington).

Denise Ortega, indígena aymará, dice: "Después de 500 años de ser invisibles y odiados, estamos reclamando contra los europeos que quieren vender nuestra propia tierra y entregar el país a los extranjeros."

## EL PODER DEL PUEBLO

POR EVO MORALES

Lo que ha pasado en estos días en Bolivia es una gran revuelta, después de ser vilipendiados por más de 500 años. Lo que ha pasado de septiembre a octubre de este año es que la razón del pueblo se ha impuesto y ha empezado a derrotar al cañón del imperio. ¡Vivimos tantos años la confrontación de dos culturas! La cultura de la vida, representada por los pueblos indígenas, y la cultura de la muerte, representada por Occidente.

Y cuando los pueblos indígenas, con muchos profesionales, inclusive con nuestros empresarios, luchamos por la vida, luchamos por la justicia, el Estado nos responde con el estado de "derecho". ¿Y qué es ese estado de "derecho" para los pueblos indígenas? El estado de "derecho" para los pobres, para los marginados, para los excluidos, es asesinatos selectivos y masacres colectivas, que hemos soportado no solamente en septiembre y octubre de este año sino durante tantos años en los que nos han querido imponer políticas de hambre y miseria. El estado de "derecho", sobre todo para los quechuas y guaraníes que vivimos en Bolivia, son las acusaciones que seguimos escuchando de que somos narcos o anarquistas.

Este levantamiento del pueblo boliviano se ha producido no solamente por el tema del gas, de los hidrocarburos, sino por el conjunto de tantos temas: por la discriminación y el marginamiento, pero fundamentalmente por el agotamiento del neoliberalismo. El responsable de tantos hechos de sangre y también responsable del levantamiento del pueblo boliviano tiene un nombre: se llama neoliberalismo.

El día 17 de octubre, día de la dignidad e identidad del pueblo boliviano, empezamos a derribar al símbolo del neoliberalismo expresado en Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, empezamos a derrotar al símbolo de la corrupción y de la mafia política. Ese día, el pueblo reaccionó oportunamente para decir como el Subcomandante Marcos: "¡Ya basta!", basta de las políticas de hambre y miseria. Para nosotros, el 17 de octubre de este año empieza la nueva etapa de cómo construir. Y eso pasa sobre cómo enfrentar o acabar con el egoísmo y con el individualismo, y cómo, desde las comunidades campesinas e indígenas, desde los barrios, construir otras formas de vivencia, en solidaridad, en reciprocidad; cómo pensar en distribuir las riquezas que están concentradas en pocas manos. Esta es la gran tarea que tenemos después de este gran levantamiento del pueblo boliviano.

Lamentablemente costó muchas vidas, y la soberbia, la prepotencia del imperio, todavía sigue vigente para seguir humillando al pueblo boliviano. Hay que decirlo: debemos estar al servicio de los movimientos sociales de los pueblos, en lugar de estar al servicio de las trasnacionales. Yo antes odiaba la política, tenía miedo de hacer política. Pero me di cuenta de que la política había sido la ciencia de servir al pueblo. Y, como es así, me parece importante servir al pueblo desde la política, que significa vivir para la política y no vivir de la política.

Nuestras luchas coordinadas entre los movimientos sociales y los movimientos políticos, con todo apoyo de nuestras instituciones colegiadas, han permitido crear mayor conciencia nacional para que el pueblo se levante en estos últimos días.

Creo que la defensa de la humanidad pasa por la eliminación del imperialismo y del neoliberalismo. Pienso que no estamos tan solos, porque he visto que después de la intervención sangrienta de Bush en Irak crece el pensamiento antiimperialista. Crece esa forma de organizarnos, de autoconvocarnos para enfrentarnos a un sistema, a una agresión del imperio contra nuestros pueblos. Crecen también las formas para fortalecer y crear el poder del pueblo.

Yo sólo creo en el poder del pueblo. Esa era mi experiencia de una región, de un departamento. Ahora, con los últimos acontecimientos en Bolivia, me he dado cuenta de que es importante el poder de todo un pueblo, de toda una nación. Para quienes estamos convencidos de que es importante defender a la humanidad, el mejor apoyo que podemos hacer es crear el poder del pueblo. Y eso pasa, sobre todo, por revisar los intereses personales, de grupo.

\* Fragmento del discurso pronunciado en el encuentro En defensa de la humanidad, México, octubre del 2003.



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